

Resolution No.:	<u>19-556</u>
Introduced:	<u>July 14, 2020</u>
Adopted:	<u>July 28, 2020</u>

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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Lead Sponsor: Health and Human Services Committee

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**SUBJECT:** Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget  
Montgomery County Government  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Permanent Supportive Housing for Veterans and Unsheltered Adults  
\$355,000 (Source of Funds: \$118,335 Federal Grant and \$236,665  
General Fund Reserves)

**Background**

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. A new coronavirus disease, named COVID-19, appeared in China in December 2019 and spread extremely quickly. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the disease a pandemic. By July 9, 2020 there were more than 3.1 million confirmed cases and 133,000 confirmed deaths in the United States. On July 9, the State of Maryland reported 71,447 confirmed cases and 3,160 deaths statewide. In Montgomery County there were 15,503 confirmed cases and 716 confirmed deaths.
3. Montgomery County is committed making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time only. This requires many strategies to meet people where they are and to housing options that operate under a Housing First policy. Moving people out of homelessness and into safe, stable, permanent housing is even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Housing is Healthcare," and it provides the environment people need to prevent contracting COVID-19 and to receive healthcare and other services they may need. Of the 63 people that entered the homeless system between March and June 2020, 73% are Black or African Americans. Black and African American people are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

4. The county's homeless Continuum of Care includes government and non-profit partners that provide homeless outreach, shelter, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and social services support to the homeless and formerly homeless population. The Continuum of Care has continued moving people from emergency shelter into permanent housing during the pandemic. One hundred and eighty-seven (187) people have been moved into permanent housing between April 1 and June 25. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that about 100 people are highly vulnerable, have a disability, and need permanent supportive housing to resolve their homelessness.
5. One of the members of the Continuum of Care, Bethesda Cares, has proposed a partnership with the county to provide permanent supportive housing and support services to 14 unsheltered adults. Bethesda Cares through its homeless outreach works with long-time unsheltered homeless adults, many are Veterans, even if they have not officially been identified as such. They estimate that three-quarters of the unsheltered homeless in the central business districts are black or brown and rather than being the subject of complaints, they need housing. Bethesda Cares recognizes the need to have a home ready when longtime, unsheltered people are ready to come in from the elements and accept housing. Bethesda Cares will provide \$158,200 that will support program components including the master leasing of apartments, furniture for move-in, case management, hot lunch and groceries, and virtual healthcare in partnership with Kaiser Permanente. The county will support this partnership by funding the ongoing permanent supportive housing for the fourteen unsheltered, vulnerable adults who will be served through this partnership.
6. The Health and Human Services Committee held a worksession on June 25, 2020 and received an update on the current Point-in-Time count of the homeless population, the efforts to maintain people's health and prevent COVID-19 infections in the emergency shelter system, information on the characteristics of who is entering the homeless system, and the Continuum of Cares' work to move individuals and families out of homelessness and into permanent housing during the pandemic. The Committee was briefed on the proposal from Bethesda Cares and recommends the Council approve funding. The Committee highlights the private contributions Bethesda Cares is bringing to this effort and the known long-term cost savings and health benefits that come from housing the homeless.
7. Services to the homeless population can be funded through CARES Act funding. This appropriation will use CARES Act funds for first four months (federal funds must be spent by December 31, 2020) and General Fund Reserves after federal funds are no longer available.
8. Public notice of this special appropriation was provided and a public hearing was held.

### **Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

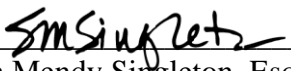
A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government, in the amount of \$355,000 is approved as follows:

	<u>Personnel Expense</u>	<u>Operating Expense</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
Department of Health and Human Services	\$0	\$118,335	\$118,335	Federal Grant
	\$0	\$236,665	\$236,665	General Fund
TOTAL	\$0	\$355,000	\$355,000	

These funds must be used by the Department of Health and Human Services to fund a permanent supportive housing partnership with Bethesda Cares that is expected to house 14 unsheltered Veterans and single adults.

This appropriation is needed to act in response to a public health or safety emergency and to act without delay in the public interest.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

  
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Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.  
Clerk of the Council